



Monitoring the illegal killing of elephants



Mikumi, Tanzania © C. Steiner

CITES MIKE PROGRAMME

Who We Are

The Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme is an elephant range States programme authorized by a resolution of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP10, Harare, 1997).

MIKE is a monitoring system put in place across the entire range of the African and Asian elephants to provide information needed for elephant range States to make appropriate management and enforcement decisions, and to build institutional capacity within the range States for the long-term management of their elephant populations.

It is also intended that this monitoring system would assist the dialogue among Parties and facilitate the decision-making by the Conference of the Parties regarding the protected status of elephants by providing reliable information to measure levels and trends in the illegal hunting of elephants; to determine changes in these trends over time; and to determine the factors causing such changes and to assess to what extent observed trends are related to CITES changes in listings or ivory trade resumptions.

What We Do

MIKE is a site-based system to monitor elephant population trends and the illegal killing of elephants. We undertake building capacity amongst the elephant range States in the following areas :

1. Site-based Population Surveys every 2 to 3 years
2. Law Enforcement Monitoring to determine any real trends in illegal activities and the factors that may be influencing any declines
3. Database management
4. Data analysis starting at the site and national level

Our Aims

To provide information needed for elephant range States to make appropriate management and enforcement decisions, and to build institutional capacity within the range States for the long-term management of their elephant populations and their habitats by:

- a) Improving their ability to monitor elephant populations
- b) Detecting changes in levels of illegal killing
- c) Using this information to provide more effective law enforcement
- d) Strengthening any regulatory measures required to support such enforcement
- e) Using this information to reduce human/elephant conflict
- f) Using this information and the MIKE institutional arrangements to foster cross border collaboration relevant to cross border elephant populations and ecosystems
- g) Establishing the MIKE system so that it can be sustainable and continue when external funding assistance ceases

Where we are

29 African Elephant Range States :

Central Africa

Cameroon
Central African Republic
Congo Republic
D. R. Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Tchad

East Africa

Eritrea
Kenya
Rwanda
Tanzania
Uganda

Southern Africa

Botswana
Mozambique
Namibia
South Africa
Zambia
Zimbabwe

West Africa

Benin
Burkina Faso
Côte D'Ivoire
Ghana
Guinea (Conakry)
Liberia
Mali
Niger
Nigeria
Senegal
Togo

“Elephants are a key species. Monitoring their numbers and taking action to arrest any declines will benefit other species and their habitats, as no ecosystem is unique to elephants. This will ensure the continuation of a biodiversity resource platform for rural livelihoods.”

Nigel Hunter, MIKE Director



Yankari, Nigeria © S. Massalatchi



Nagarahole, India © A. Venkataraman

Expected Benefits

The main benefit of the MIKE monitoring system will include a much-increased knowledge of elephant numbers and movements and a better understanding of the threats to their survival, as well as the associated knowledge of other species and their habitats generally.

A further benefit will be understanding more fully the impact, or lack of impact, of decisions taken pursuant to CITES to support elephant conservation so that policy instruments in the international arena can become responsive to the identification of negative impacts or consequences.

Additional outcomes are anticipated as follows:

- Elephant populations and their ecosystems in Africa and Asia are managed in sustainable and benefitting ways, including the reduction of human/elephant conflict.
- Observation reports and data about threatened and endangered species are regularly available in all elephant range states.

Institutional Arrangements

The African and Asian regions are divided into four and two sub-regions respectively. Each of these sub-regions has its MIKE implementation supervised by a Steering Committee comprising of the national wildlife directors of the range States, and facilitated by the MIKE Secretariat which comprises a Central Coordinating Unit in Nairobi, Kenya and six sub-regional support officers. Each range State has nominated a National Officer and Site Officers as the core staff for implementing the MIKE monitoring system in their respective territories.

In addition, there is a MIKE Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which comprises one expert from each sub-region and six nominated specialists. The principle role of the TAG is to guide the technical quality of the MIKE processes and techniques, and to act as a peer review group on the data analyses.

Funding Arrangements

In the longer term, the programme is scheduled to switch from external funding support to in-country recurrent budget support. Experience shows that this switch is best achieved when the external support for developing capacity and building institutional routines is available for 8-10 years.

Currently, external support for MIKE is being provided by the European Community, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Governments of Belgium and Japan, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society and WWF International. But this welcome support is not adequate to sustain programme activities at full momentum over the 8-year period. As such, further financial assistance is always needed.

13 Asian Elephant Range States

South Asia

Bangladesh
Bhutan
India
Nepal
Sri Lanka

Southeast Asia

Cambodia
China
Indonesia
Lao
Malaysia
Myanmar
Thailand
Vietnam

Potential Range States

Angola
Ethiopia
Malawi
Sierra Leone
Sudan

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